

THE EUROPEAN UNION AT 50: LESSONS FOR LATIN AMERICA*

*“A cynic is a man who knows everything about prices
but nothing about values” (Oscar Wilde)*

European Ideals and Contents

Futurologist Jeremy Rifkin advances a compelling case for the ascendancy of European ideals. “While the American Spirit is tiring and languishing in the past”, he writes, “a new European Dream is being born” – one that emphasizes community relationships over individual autonomy, cultural diversity over assimilation, quality of life over the accumulation of wealth, sustainable development over unlimited material growth, deep play over unrelenting toil, and universal human rights.” The global financier George Soros is putting money behind a similar idea, seeking to create a new European Council on Foreign relations premised on the notion that US foreign policy “has left the world leaderless and in disarray”, Europe and a revitalized EU, he believes, offers a better “model and motive force” for addressing the global challenges of the modern area.

As always and everywhere the question is how and if the three, and in the future even four fundamental value goals can be met: freedom and democracy, justice and social security, dynamic and wealth and finally, environment and ecology. There are some regions in this world, the United States of America for one, where the freedom of the individual and the market are considered the main and absolute value and where a state supported solidarity is seen as nothing more than “ways to thralldom” (Hayek) or varieties of Socialism. Others, on the other hand, for instance China and Russia, want to achieve economic growth and growth of their power by uncoupling capitalism from democracy and freedom and abandoning social coherence. They expect solidarity, and social bonds from private, traditional and voluntary networks. From a global perspective Europe seems to be the only one to stick to the ambitious goal of orienting itself to all values, of optimizing them all together and not to play one off against the other. In this respect, the sociologist Dahrendorf has spoken already very early of the quadrature of the circle. Certain topics have re-emerged (justice), have come to the fore (family, education, migration) or were put in the centre of attention (climate change), which are now replacing the economic reform agenda (tax reduction, deregulation), which has been

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dominant for years, by a comprehensive political programme, adapted to the present developments and which can also make European political parties and governments attractive again to its citizens.

Historical background

In spring 2007, 50 years of the Treaties of Rome were celebrated all over Europe. These 50 years, however, do not represent the starting point of what is today the European Union. The development did in fact start right after the end of World War II.

Looking at the actual situation in Europe today, we have to realize that the disastrous development with the two World Wars nearly led to the self destruction of the old continent. Thousands of years of conflicts, wars, slaughtering, battles, mass killings and not too long ago the holocaust showed a continent, which seemed not to be able to regulate its conflicts in a peaceful way. If you go through the history, practically everybody was fighting everybody at least once in that war shaken part of the world.

After World War I. and after Versailles, being the other extreme of the incapacity of the European nations to establish a structure in which conflicts can be dealt with by negotiations, fascism, and this has to be pointed out very clearly, ruling important countries in Europe e.g. Germany, Italy, Spain, was the worst outcome of a development on the eve of self destruction.

At this point it is important to mention the role of the United States of America and its contribution to the defeat of this inhuman system. I do mention it here on purpose in order to avoid any misunderstandings concerning other parts of this lecture.

It is also important to note, that it were European countries establishing colonies in other parts of this globe, beginning with the Americas, moving over to Africa and Asia. All of the empires being big or small did have their colonies – with a tiny little exception: the Austro-Hungarian Empire never had colonies and did never intend to have any. Maximilian in Mexico was a mere French enterprise.

In the line of the de-colonisation processes and the defeat of fascism a new era seemed to have appeared on the horizon. Nevertheless, the new situation did already bear the seeds of decision among the anti-fascist alliance.

After World War II Europe was split into two parts. The eastern part was dominated by one of the four allies - the Soviet Union - and had its own economic system (planned economy) and also security organization the so called Warsaw Pact or Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO). The western part followed the principles of free market economy, democracy and protected itself by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Those two blocks remained hostile and the Cold War was the denomination of the then existing situation.

In 1947 the Paris Treaty regulated the situation of Italy; Germany and Austria had still been under the rule of the four allied powers.

Austria

At this stage of the historical development I would like to go a bit more into detail about my home country Austria. Since the end of World War II., the Austrian government (in which the communist party participated) had tried to negotiate the country's independence. At first efforts did not show any success until Stalin's death. It was in April 1955 when a delegation of the Austrian government travelled to Moscow in order to achieve positive results for Austria on the road to freedom. The outcome of this visit in Moscow was the Moscow Memorandum in which the Soviet Union declared its readiness to agree to a State Treaty. Coming back from Moscow the government had to convince the United States to agree and the State Treaty was signed. In October of the same year the Austrian parliament declared Austria's everlasting neutrality and the allied troops left the country.

Since then, Austrian neutrality has become an important factor in the security structure of central Europe and proved its first merits during the revolts against Soviet occupation in Hungary. The same proof was given in the year 1968 when Soviet tanks ended the Prague

Spring. The Austrian population considers neutrality of one of the pillars of Austrian identity as well as one of the instruments for securing its independence until today.

The Republic of Austria, especially in the times of the government of Mr. Kreisky, realized a policy of active neutrality. Active neutrality in that context does not only mean the equidistance from the two blocks at that time, but much more the representation of a policy of mediation and bridge building.

At that time neutrality was interpreted as the equidistance between East and West, at the same time showing western democratic structures and ideologies. Today neutrality is the will of the Austrian population not to have foreign troops on its soil and not to take part in conflicts except with the mandate of the United Nations. Estimations show that between 70 and 80% of the Austrian population is in favour of neutrality and only a few advocate membership in a military alliance. The matter was especially discussed when the Soviet block faded away and some politicians thought that Austria had to become a member of NATO. Since then, any party trying to touch neutrality has lost and would lose elections.

European Integration

At the same time, the first integration efforts of Europe started parallel to the above mentioned development. The first step into the direction of a new policy of Europe and the deconstruction of outdated enemy figures had been set forward. This was expressed by the foundation of the so called *Montanunion* (France, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy). Consequently politicians of these countries can be called the founding fathers of today's Europe, e.g. Schumann, de Gasperi and Monnet. Their vision is the true basis of today's Europe.

Again: this was still the time of tension between the East and the West and the utmost expression of the existing conflict were the two military alliances (WTO and NATO). The attraction of the new existing Union grew stronger every day. The COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) on the eastern side was the counter part of the later founded European Economic Community (1993 the EEC was renamed EC). At the same time a

parallel western economic union was founded, the EFTA, of which countries like Great Britain and Austria were members.

In the field of security the Cold War was replaced by détente following the considerations that hostile relations are of no benefit to either side.

Nevertheless, the two military alliances continued their arms race (middle range missile crisis).

Enlargement

After the fall of the iron curtain and the end of the Soviet Union the attraction of the successful economic entities in the west brought about the idea of the integration of former socialist countries into the EU. In the meantime EFTA-countries and some other European countries did also join the European Union.

Today you find 27 countries being members of the European Union.

By the historical development one can see that the enlargement of the EU has taken place step by step and not following a general master plan. On the one hand there is the attractiveness of a more or less well functioning economic entity, on the other hand there is the possibility to be integrated into the dominating group of countries of our continent that makes the European Union so attractive. A very, very important argument is the fact that conflicts which of course also exist today – and I will get back to this topic later on – are solved in a peaceful way. This has never been the case in European history so far.

History does not count in steps of one or two, not even ten years, but just imagine that conflict resolution of today has practically started this morning compared to the long years of violent conflicts on the continent. It is in fact the relation between 50 years in peace and at least 3000 years of war. That is the real success story of the European Union.

Nevertheless, with the enlargement, the whole setup of the European Union began to shake. The discussions between those who favoured quick enlargement at any cost (they finally got it

through) and those in favour of a deepening of the Union in terms of envisaging a “constitution” and a better adaptation of the inner structures of the new countries to the EU practice, became stronger. A handful of new countries are now able to block progress in the EU and in formulation a Common Security and Foreign Policy.

As example one might name the positions in foreign policy of Warsaw and Prague, but also Romania. A special issue in that context is the fact that some of these countries did allow secret CIA prisons practicing torture on European soil. The latter undermines clearly the spirit and substance of what is the European Union.

The EU as a global player

Having said this, the big question arises: *quo vadis* Europe? And if you ask this question, reference has to be made to the role Europe is trying to take as a global player. Let’s take several fields as examples and analyse the actual situation and possible future development.

Economy: The European Union is the largest market place and the biggest trading partner on the globe. The common currency, the Euro, facilitated and strengthened the economy on the one hand, on the other hand, particularly this strength makes exports more expensive.

The discussion goes and will possibly be decided by the voters between those advocating a neo liberal US-type policy and others, who do prefer a more social oriented with a value system beyond the adoration of the golden calf.

The economical structure of Europe is seen not only in terms of profit but also in relation to social and ecological dimensions. The European identity is therefore often understood as a liberal (not in the US sense of the word) and social one and its efforts to come to grips with the globalization process are decisive for shaping its profile. Many in Europe’s future will depend on the competitiveness of European structures versus a neo liberal design in which the market regulates everything.

Assumption: I am of the opinion that a Europe as perceived by the founding fathers will not be possible in the framework of neo liberal structures.

The absolute egoism in neo liberal thinking “the winner takes it all” will have its repercussions on the behaviour of the governments within the European Union. Nationalistic thinking, a relict of the unhappy past (see above) is on the best way to destroy the achievements of the European Union. The spirit of the Treaties of Rome must be the guiding line and not the maximization of profit for some big multinationals or the narrow minded happiness of nationalist leaders.

One of the reasons why people in France and the Netherlands rejected the proposed constitution for Europe goes along the above mentioned thoughts.

Not the market and the famous invisible hand alone should rule but the whole complexity of social, cultural, political and ecological dimensions. Otherwise the malfunctioning of European elites (politicians pressed by strong lobbies) will be shown to a rather ridicule extent when it comes to discuss the future of Europe (see the quote of *Oscar Wilde*)

Foreign Policy

For Europe certain areas are of utmost importance. There is the transatlantic agenda , then there is the relationship to Russia and eastern Europe followed by the importance of the Middle East in terms of energy procurement and security, China, India and Japan are a growing factor and there is of course the so called Third World.

Nearly in all of the agendas mentioned above, Europe is lacking the capacity to speak with one voice. Recent events clearly show that some of the countries regard the Unites States of America their master and do not follow common goals or principles of solidarity within the European Union.

For the time being a common security and foreign policy (CSFP) only exists in less important affairs. Even in foreign relations there are two people formally representing the EU – Mr. Solana and Ms Ferrero-Waldner. Because of the lack of a common constitution and the lack of will plus diverging national interests of several EU-members it is hard to imagine that one day there will exist a common formulation for a real CSFP.

Divisions:

Too many divisions still go through the economically attractive building of the European Union. There are some countries trying to do their own foreign policy based on so called national interests. There are others who prefer to cooperate more with the only remaining superpower and there is the majority of middle sized and smaller countries left alone in the net of contradictions. There are some members called “old Europe” and others called “new Europe”; and there are nuclear powers and non-nuclear powers.

Historically there exist certain affinities within a group of countries shown by certain common interests. Although the USA state publicly that they are in favour of a united Europe, facts do speak another language (see US missiles in Central Europe). In the times of the Iraq war and the so called “coalition of the willing” a couple of countries joined the US, others did not. A classical split.

It is understandable that for historical reasons some of the new countries do rely more on the power of the USA and less on a conglomerate of European countries which cannot unite in order to defend against inner and outside dangers.

Russia:

The same split can be seen in the position and relation to Russia and other Eastern European countries, but predominantly Russia. Some of the countries which joined the European Union recently reflect their past in different positions to Russia than countries like Germany, France and Italy. One or the other newcomer even goes back to the times of the last war and before, when considering the relations of the European Union with Russia. Anti-Communism is replaced by anti-Russian positions. In that context especially the media share a big part of responsibility meanwhile the big European multinationals, the energy consumers and business in general is taking a much more pragmatic approach.

The big discussion today goes along the lines of the high dependency on Russian energy resources in connection with security issues. The Ukraine was a perfect example which shows that Russia is applying market principles to former allies. It also shows the vulnerability of energy proliferation from the East, although it has to be stated that Russia has never been responsible for late or stopping delivery of oil or gas. In that context it is a must for the European Union to adhere to pragmatic principles of partnership with Russia.

Russia, on the other hand, is mounting up enormous sums of capital (out of the energy selling process) and will have to decide where to invest: either in the diversification of her own industrial structure, intensifying raw material deliveries to Europe, or, as it seems recently, respond to certain military threats to the country (see e.g. the cancellation of the ABM-Treaty and new NATO bases coming closer to Russia year by year). One might remember the promises which have been made to the late Russian president, Mr. Jelzin, by NATO and the USA indicating that military NATO will not move forward. These promises have been broken (see the efforts of Georgia to enter NATO and other military bases in Europe).

The eternal question of a democratic Russia or of an authoritarian led country should be viewed in a historical context.

Middle East:

The European relation to the Middle East shows the same distortions with some very US-loyal countries and others, trying to avoid conflicts. At least it seems that there is a common position concerning the Iran and its nuclear policy. The area for Europe is the most dangerous and conflictive one and Europe may have to pay for the mistakes of others.

China:

The very complex policy of Europe towards China is a remarkable mixture between economic success and safeguarding security issues, full of contradictions and leaving out almost completely the human rights dimension. It is either forgotten or overlooked in the run of making good business. European economy is transferring production to China to the shareholders benefit and to the disadvantage of European employees in terms of employment. China is seen rather as a chance to make business and a cooperation partner than as a challenge.

Latin America

Historically explainable are the relations of former colonial powers to the countries existing today on those territories. In the Latin American context we have of course to mention Spain and Portugal, the two countries with the best knowledge of what is Latin America. These two countries are exercising a foreign policy to the advantage of the European Union but also and not at least to their own benefit.

The main country in the relations with Latin America is Spain, which traditionally exercises stable relations with Latin America with the

exception of the years before the actual government came into power, where Spain adhered to a mere follower of the US, losing very good positions in Latin America.

Africa

The relations to Africa are characterized by the extreme poverty of the continent. Especially the problem of migrations lies heavily on the countries on the southern border of Europe, and common efforts are necessary to help those countries to overcome the enormous problem of migration. Needless to say that the main problem of Africa is poverty and Europe is simply not doing enough to assist the African in their fight against poverty.

Security

New challenges need new answers. Still, old threats exist and I would like to mention here only the famous comment of George P. Schultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn referring to “a world free of nuclear weapons”. These new challenges do not exist in the form of military threats but do have ecological aspects, aspects of organized crime (drugs, human trafficking), terrorism and energy problems. Human security is another aspect which must be observed.

In the light of new threat perceptions the discussion arises whether Europe should become a fortress or continue to be an open, non aggressive, democratic power. In terms of armament Europe is in any case about ten years behind the arms development in the US.

These new, and in a way not so new problems cannot be solved by military means. The militarization of international relations has therefore to be rejected.

The security structures in Europe are a direct consequence of its economic development and its foreign policy. Nevertheless it has to be noted, that

especially in this field there is an absolute lack of unity. The split within the Union is multidimensional: we have NATO as the main pillar of security and the majority of EU-members are members of NATO. However, in view of the dominant role of the US (see Iraq) a big discussion was raised on the formation of mere European military forces like the famous battle groups as a form of rapid deployment force apart from NATO – and there are neutral countries as well with different interests.

US bases in central Europe:

It is interesting to note that in the course of the intentions of the US to construct a missile basis in Poland in connection with a radar link in the Czech Republic the Secretary General of NATO had to explain to the members of NATO this intention. This is to say, that the action of the US, Poland and the Czech Republic had not been agreed upon before in NATO also not in the EU and even less with neighbours. The latest information is that the US had already got in touch with Prague in 2002 concerning the planned military bases.

Right now there is a big discussion going on in Europe on this issue. A majority tends to reject this move of the US: The main argument against it is based on the fear of triggering a new arms race on European soil. It is also questioned whether the system would work at all and nobody does in fact believe that it is directed against a possible nuclear attack from Iran. The European population is also in Poland and the Czech Republic, according to the latest polls, against the creation of a conflictive situation in the centre of Europe.

New tone in EU neighbourly relations

The Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic gave a rather rude answer to the very mild statement of our government against the planned military installation. He simply stated that Austria is not entitled to protest since it is, according to his opinion, not contributing to European defence. Meanwhile many governments have expressed their preoccupation concerning the same

issue. The same Czech Foreign Minister answered a journalist what would be his point of view concerning a statement of a Russian General in relation to the missiles: We do not care about what a Russian General is saying. On the same demagogic level one would have to answer in the above mentioned context, that the people in the Czech Republic did care very much about Russian Generals and about Austrian help in 1968 when the Soviet tanks entered Prague.

Inability to formulate a CSFP

The above mentioned issue is again splitting the unity of the European Union as it have done the Iraq war and other dimensions of the US-policy. It is, by the way, militarily questionable whether or not the systems would function. The decisive question is: Cui bono?

It is necessary to establish a united position towards Russia, taking into account the necessity to live together, to work together and to achieve a positive future on this continent. Therefore a pragmatic policy towards Russia is a must as expressed by the German EU-Presidency and other Foreign Ministers as those of France and Italy.

In view of the EUs inability to formulate a common point of view concerning security dimensions, I see it very difficult to find a common denominator as long as there is the inability of the EU to reject outside influences, following the principle of divide et impera.

Energy security:

The discussion between the notion of energy security vs. energy and security seems to be a sophisticated one, it is nevertheless, decisive.

In this context the Austrian government has planed to raise the percentage of renewable energy within the next 20 years up to 40%. Even the US are in a

way trying to jump on the train by supporting the development of new energy forms, especially to fight the Co2 problem.

The invisible hand of the market will under no circumstances regulate the energy and climate problem. It is therefore necessary, also for the EU, to re-dimension energy policy and I understand that the German Presidency is on the way to act in this field.

Climate

The driving force for the protection of the global climate seems to be Europe today, although it shares a big part of responsibility in particular in the production of CO2. The contradictions between Europe on one side, the US, Russia and China, as a second dimension, and the big newly industrializing countries (India and Brazil) on the other, are rising.

Relations with Latin America

The average European lives with the imagination that Latin America is a kind of monolithic block from El Paso down to Tierra de Fuego. Since the exact contrary is the case, policy towards Latin America, especially from the side of the European Union must be a diversified one.

In Europe you can somehow differ between three types of countries

- countries with a human rights approach having less economic relations but also less knowledge about reality in Latin America
- countries with economic interests and powerful economies
- countries with a very pragmatic approach and vast economic interests

Regarding the first group I might mention the Nordic countries, in the second group countries like Great Britain and Germany and in the latter Spain, Portugal and Italy.

These differences do play a role when it comes to “ideological classifications”, but in view of a more common policy towards Latin America Spain is the leading power in terms of knowledge and economic interests. I do not know whether or not it is true what the former president of Spain, Mr, Aznar once stated: “Everything concerning Latin America and the European Union has to go through Spain.” If this is the case, the 26 remaining countries should enlarge their knowledge of Latin America.

Cultural influence:

There is a great wave of cultural influence of Latin America on Europe (music, literature etc.) and everybody in our discos knows salsa, samba and tango. This superficial popularity is hiding the lack of knowledge. Latin America is for the mere sake of geographical distance not representing a danger (see Tlatelolco) – contrary to other regions of this globe. The disadvantage of the lack of knowledge is reflected by the relatively small trading volumes between the two regions. Although MERCOSUR is having 60% of its foreign trade with the European Union, and every second year Summit meetings are held – the last one by the way perfectly organized by the Austrian Presidency in 2006 – the difficulties on the agrarian sector prevail. I somehow have the feeling that the European Union is - provocatively formulated - ceding Latin America to the US; in fact obeying to the old Monroe doctrine.

The discussions in Europe concerning Latin America are centred around ideological criteria of good leftists and bad leftists, following the path of the Manichaeic world view of the actual US administration. However the real development in Latin America proceeds, it is not followed by a realistic analysis in Europe. From my point of view Latin American reality is not reflected in its general approach. There are tables of discussion on burning issues like drugs, human trafficking, organized crime and migration, but no real comprehensive steps are taken, not even in economic terms.

Another field of discrepancy is the dimension of security. In the 1990s the existing dialogue between the European Union and the Group of Rio on security ended without major repercussion. The reasons might have been on both sides, the new forms of threat demand however also new forms of cooperation.

Integration:

A couple of years ago I was invited by the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) to talk on integration. All I did was to show the development of the EU, which started out with six and holds right now with 27 members, uniting a region which rightly had been called the most conflictive part of the world. It grew by itself on the bases of a wonderful idea. Ideological approaches have not been very useful.

To argue very clearly: It is very difficult to have a comparison between the integration processes of Europe and Latin America. Historical, economical, geographical and climatic differences are simply too big.

In these times I do see fundamental changes in Latin American development, and not because of less leftist or more rightist governments. These changes are based on economic south-south cooperations and are laying the ground for real integration on the subcontinent. It is the economic hardware which decides and not so much political will or ideological conviction, which are of course necessary too.

It might be counterproductive on the long run to pick certain countries on a bilateral basis and conclude treaties with them. Latin America is undoubtedly on the way to integration and Brazil is according to the latest statistics number ten in world economy enjoying a growth rate passing South Korea. With this strong locomotive integration will be easier as long as other Latin American countries somehow follow the rise in economic growth.

Sooner or later this region will therefore have similar structures as Europe. Allow me a comment on this problem: An obstacle for integration might be the different perception and notion of the concept of sovereignty. The prevailing concept is similar to the one we had in Europe by the end of World War II. This perception, although understandable, if one considers for example the manifold military interventions of the US, has to be changed into a concept of giving up parts of sovereignty for the benefit of a union or whatever an integrative result might be called.

In the European Union we do of course have differences between bigger countries like Germany, France the United Kingdom and Spain and smaller countries like Austria, Ireland

and Slovenia. These differences do not matter as long as there is not one particular dominant power.

One of the main arguments for Europe is that alongside the integration process there was no single dominating country. For that reason an integration of the Americas would show distorting results.

Remaining questions

Besides the already mentioned problems like a lack of unity, permanent influence of the US, different economic levels etc. there are other, more general dimensions still open.

1. I see a huge problem in the gap between failing elites and the people of Europe. This is not only a result of missing institutions within the European Union, like e.g. a functioning constitution, but it is also an expression of a deficit in democratic structures in the member states. To give an example: people cannot understand that a government goes to war even though there is a majority of 80-90% of the population against the war, but still the government does not take into consideration the vital question of life and death and the will of the voters and still goes to war (Aznar in Spain, Berlusconi in Italy)
2. I have at the beginning of the paper quickly mentioned the economic dimension where Europe is the leading region on the globe. Still there is a rejection to the notion of being governed by big multinationals and humans being merely considered walking economic entities. Without any doubt there exists poverty in Europe as well as unemployment to a rather big extent. That the proposed constitution was not accepted in France and the Netherlands (I am sure that many other countries would have voted against it as well, if they have had the opportunity to like possibly my own country at least according to the polls.) goes definitely back to the feeling that the existing political and economical elites prefer a rather rude model of US-like capitalism. The various documents of the EU do show this (Lisbon and other declarations). The contradiction is between the theories of Milton Friedmann and Geoffrey Sachs on one side and Keynes and

Stieglitz on the other side. This is the reason why I started the lecture quoting Oscar Wilde “*A cynic is a man who knows everything about prices but nothing about values*”. A new or the old value system of the founding fathers is wanted. The majority of the European does not want a mere economic community. Most governments have a tendency to blaming Brussels for the bad and giving themselves credits for the good developments. This does not particularly contribute to the strengthening of the link between Brussels and the Europeans.

3. Enlargement: I am of the opinion that the enlargement process recently has gone too fast. There are specialists arguing that those countries which follow rather Washington than Brussels will realize, after a certain period of time, where their interests and home are located. They argue that rather sooner than later governments of those countries will return to Europe. I am somehow sceptical, for historical reasons but also for the lack of willingness of the US not to interfere with other countries’ internal affairs. The past years did at least not show success in that aspect. A big discussion issue is whether or not Turkey should enter the Union. Since the European population has in fact not been asked about the enlargement, a kind of fatigue can be registered in most countries. People think that right now no steps towards any enlargement should be taken, the speed has anyway been too fast.

4. Fortress vs. community of social welfare: The broad majority of the European have learned their lectures of the past and do not want to militarize international relations. They think that problems of the climate, traffic, energy, organized crime etc. cannot be solved by military means. Others argue for a very strong European defence policy. Some of today’s members became members of NATO before joining the EU, and found themselves 5 minutes after their entry at war. The nuclear issue is a very important factor in these discussions; just to give a figure: in Poland and the Czech Republic there is between 70% and 80% of the population against the US missile shield on their soil. An upcoming problem is the old and dangerous nuclear dimension. The failing Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) increases nuclear danger.

5. Europe's limits: Many ask what the limits of Europe are and this question is not meant in terms of geography but much more in the context of culture and politics. In this context the dimensions dealt with before underline the necessity of strengthening regional and sub-regional cultural, economical and ecological entities. The diversity of culture and language must not be a disadvantage since it is in fact the expression of wealth. Europe should not be a melting pot but should provide equal chances to all the nations and cultures within its limits.

6. Constitution: Much has been said today about the problems in achieving a constitution for Europe. I am convinced that a constitution is necessary, but it should be brought about by real democratic means. The representation of governments and parliaments should be questioned and referenda should be held in all countries, although political reality seems to contradict this statement.

Résumé

In spite of all existing problems I mentioned, I am deeply convinced that the European Union will continue its success story. I was born at the end of World War II and I am grateful to have not experienced war. I also want my children to live the same. This is the reason why we have to continue to fight for democracy and just societies. Nothing should be taken for granted, we have to achieve things every day and I will close with a quote of the late Chilean President Slavador Allende: “Más temprano que tarde se abrirán las grandes alamedas...”